

Exchange With Reporters at a Meeting With Arkansas High School Students

February 11, 1993

The President. This is the Close-Up program, but they're not close up. [Laughter]

Did you hear what I said today, Helen? [Helen Thomas, United Press International]

Q. What?

The President. When I went in from the run? I said you had a great voice. It pierced the atmosphere.

Q. Yes, but you didn't answer any questions.

The President. I know, all your questions—have any answer—

Attorney General

Q. Got a woman for Attorney General?

Q. Mr. President, are you not committed to an across-the-board business tax increase?

Q. Which one's going to be President someday?

Q. You've got 14 lawyers in the Cabinet. Which one's going to be Attorney General?

The President. Well, we thought it would be part of my productivity in Government. We have so many lawyers in the Cabinet—something I didn't know, actually, until someone pointed it out to me—that we could just rotate the job once a month among the lawyers. [Laughter]

Town Meetings and Media Relations

Q. Mr. President, you had some tough words for the businessmen today. Will there be similarly tough words for middle class taxpayers come next week?

The President. I talked to them last night. I think they got the message. I was really pleased with that last night. I liked it because the people who were asking questions, basically, they talked to me just like they did when I was a candidate. I was glad there was no difference in their—

Q. Why do you think we're different?

The President. —questions to challenge me, I like it.

Q. Why do you think the press is not with you?

The President. Why what?

Q. You said the press is not in your world.

The President. Why, what do you mean?

Q. We think differently or something?

Q. You said we think differently.

The President. No, no, I said just on—what was I talking about? [Laughter]

Q. Washington.

Q. Press corps.

The President. No, no, no, there was a specific question.

Q. Press conferences among the White House press corps. And you said, I answered that question—

The President. [Inaudible]—the question was about. You've got to get—before you lay that on me, you've got to put it in proper context now. What was—

Q. Okay, you said we see the world differently.

The President. Well, I think sometimes you do, but that's what you're hired to do. That's your job.

Attorney General

Q. Is it a man for Attorney General, sir?

The President. It's a lawyer. How's that?

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:50 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe of Japan

February 11, 1993

The President. We just had a very serious trade talk here. We decided that when all the people came in and took all the pictures that

I was contributing to the Japanese trade surplus

because of all the film that was being shot.

Q. Are you relieved, sir, that you have finally settled upon an Attorney General?

The President. I'll discuss that at 4:30 p.m.

Q. Are you asking for greater access for American goods in Japan?

The President. This is just the beginning of our relationship. We had a little talk about trade. And Minister Watanabe said that he thought that we shouldn't become protectionist in our relationship. And I agreed, but I said I thought we had to bring the trade deficit down and that I would be working with him on it very firmly.

Q. Did he agree to that?

The President. Yes, he agreed. As a matter of fact, he discussed some things that he thought would be done. So we had a good talk. But it was very preliminary. You shouldn't attach any burden on him because he came to see me today.

Q. So you're going to be friends?

The President. Well, I think we'll be friends and we'll have a few disagreements and a lot of agreements.

Q. So is this lawyer you mentioned a woman?

The President. At 4:30 p.m.

Q. At each photo op you go a little bit further.

Q. Will we see her on the way out?

The President. I hope not.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. Mr. President, will you meet with the Japanese Prime Minister by the end of March? Have any plans?

The President. I don't think a specific date has been set yet, but I want very much to meet with him in the near future. The Japanese-American relationship is very important, not only to Japan and to America but to the rest of the world. And I think it's important that we meet pretty soon, and I'm trying to set it up now.

Q. Was there a big agenda for this meeting, today's meeting?

The President. Was there a big agenda? Well, we talked for a good while, as you probably know, about a wide range of things, everything from the AIDS crisis to the situation in Russia, to the GATT round, to the necessity of resolving the trade differences between our two countries. It was a good first meeting. I thought it was a good first meeting.

Q. [Inaudible]—diplomatic?

The President. It's my job.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's News Conference With Attorney-General-Designate Janet Reno

February 11, 1992

Nomination of Janet Reno To Be Attorney General

The President. Good afternoon. One of my central missions as President is to reconnect the Government of the American people with the people who sent us here. Government cannot be an abstract, distant entity. It must be directly linked to the real lives of real people. I pledged when I ran to reach beyond Washington to bring the best from America's statehouses and court-houses to our Government. And I believe that my Cabinet and other appointees have fulfilled that pledge so far.

No agency needs an injection of innovative spirit more than the Department of Justice.

Americans demand and deserve freedom from crime in their homes, at their schools, and on the streets. Talking tough is easy. Actually getting results is much more difficult and much more rare. Thousands of prosecutors and police across America have been developing successful ways to fight crime and, just as important, to restore the sense of security that makes community possible in our Nation. I expect my Justice Department to take those lessons and apply them nationally, to be an innovator for law enforcement.

After years of political controversy and abuse, the Justice Department also needs an Attorney General who will bring a sense of pride, integ-